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ABUJA DATELINE

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USAID signs MOU with Cross River, Ebonyi states



Mission Director, Pat Fleuret and Cross River state Governor Donald Duke signing the MOU

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Nigeria and the Executive Governors of Cross River and Ebonyi states, Mr. Donald Duke and Dr. Sam Egwu, in July signed a Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of their respective states. The MOUs lay out the parameters of the relationship between USAID's REFORMS (Restructured Economic Framework for Openness Reform and Macro-Economic Stability) project and the two governments for the next four years. Under this Memorandum of Understanding, the USAID REFORMS Project will provide technical support for capacity building, the state budget process and civil society organizations' participation in policy advocacy in the two states.

The REFORMS project seeks to strengthen governance in the selected states by helping them to implement improved and transparent budgetary systems and assisting civil society organizations (CSOs) operating in these states to effectively advocate for improved, transparent and accountable budgeting. Improved budget management tools will lead to better public investment decisions

and ultimately yield discernable improvements in citizens' wellbeing. The execution of the MOUs demonstrates the strong relationship between the two countries and the US Government's commitment to assisting Nigeria to achieve the goals of Nigeria's National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and selected state development strategies. USAID's objectives are closely aligned with the NEEDS goals of wealth creation, poverty reduction, employment generation and value reorientation, and reflect USAID's comparative advantage, technical expertise, areas of engagement and lessons learned during its 40-year history in Nigeria.

USAID to improve PMTCT treatment in Kaduna

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) participated in a rapid assessment of twelve government hospitals in Kaduna state with a view to upgrade Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) activities at those sites. The scale up presents an opportunity for the USAID and the President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR) team to increase clinical services in the state.

Presently, PMTCT services are available in few facilities due to resource constraints and the sheer size of the state. Also the level of service delivery differs significantly where available, ranging from a sophisticated level of care to little or no service at sites where care is supposed to be provided.

The assessment, which involved Columbia University (CU), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and Kaduna state government as partners, will take into consideration structural development and drug supply to these sites. The appraisal is expected to arrive at a participatory decision on the level of service/assistance that can

realistically be provided at the various facilities and develop a unified work plan.

The hospitals are Barau Dikko Specialist Hospital, Kaduna; Yusuf Dan Psoho Hospital Tudun Wada, Kaduna; Gwamna Awan Hospital Kakuri, Kaduna; Gambo Sawaba Hospital, Zaria; General Hospital Giwa; General Hospital Makarfi; General Hospital Ikara

and General Hospital Birnin Gwari. Others are General Hospital Kagarko; General Hospital Kachia; General Hospital Kwoi and General Hospital Gwantu.

USAID in collaboration with UNICEF will support the supply of PMTCT drugs, renovation of laboratories, training and retraining of PMTCT services personnel.

Nigeria gets 4 HIV/AIDS Counseling, Testing and Training Centers

The School of Nursing and Midwifery at Gwagwalada Specialist Hospital in the Federal Capital Territory became one of four new HIV/AIDS Counseling and Testing Training Centers opened by the United States Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. John Campbell on August 17, 2006. During the ceremony, he also simultaneously commissioned the other centers. The other centers are located in Lagos, Calabar and Kano.

The counseling and testing training centers are the product of a partnership between USAID, the Global HIV/AIDS Initiative in Nigeria (GHAIN) and the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria. Under the program, up to 3,000 HIV/AIDS counselors and testers for an estimated 10 million clients are to be trained during the next two years. Drawn from the nursing profession, the counselors are to subsequently provide services for those who are eligible for antiretroviral treatment (ART). The counseling and testing course is an integral part of their training as nurses.

Speaking at the occasion, Ambassador Campbell pointed out that the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) will, in cooperation with the government of Nigeria, reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS through sustainable treatment, care and prevention programs. He highlighted the importance the nursing profession as a key partner in counseling and the eventual provision of treatment to patients.

Referring to Nigerians' enthusiasm for voluntary HIV testing, he said that health personnel are being trained using the more accessible non-cold chain dependent rapid test kits which the Nigerian government recently approved. Ambassador Campbell told the audience of graduates, stakeholders and other health personnel that the new method promotes transparency because samples and test kits never leave the client's sight, thus building trust in the reliability of the tests and confidentiality of the results.

He attested the United States government's willingness to continue to collaborate with the government of Nigeria to strengthen the capacities of care providers, to increase effective counseling and testing services, and to support both public and private organizations in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Nigeria.

In the past, the United States government has assisted in establishing the first voluntary counseling and testing unit in the country. Twenty-nine graduates of the first counseling and testing course at the nursing school were presented with certificates by Ambassador Campbell.



Ambassador Campbell opening the Gwagwalada Center

USAID fights Fistula



The Sultan with the ACQUIRE team

His Eminence, Sultan Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido of Sokoto, CFR receiving members of the ACQUIRE project during a visit to his palace. The Access Quality and Use in Reproductive Health (ACQUIRE) project is a USAID intervention to increase access to and use of high quality fistula prevention, repair and reintegration among Nigerian women. The scheme which will involve training of fistula surgeons and reintegration of patients, will operate in Kano, Katsina, Zamfara, Sokoto and Kebbi states.

Special Needs Conference

In furtherance of the Mission's disability policy, USAID/Nigeria will fund a team to attend the Ninth International Congress on Community Services for Children, Youth and Families with Special Needs due to hold in Washington DC from December 5 to 9, 2006. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services with the support of USAID, the assembly is expected to find ways communities and countries can tap the skills and abilities of children and youth with special needs and include such as assets in national development. This biannual event has been the only international forum where young people with disabilities have the opportunity to contribute to their nations' education

and economic advancement. USAID has worked assiduously over the last decade to sponsor children and youth from the developing world to attend the congresses. With the theme 'Community Access and Resources for Everyone' (CARE), sessions will be held on how to increase abilities of disabled people by ensuring they can equitably access health, education, housing, vocational opportunities, transportation and assistive technologies.

On return, nine USAID/Nigeria beneficiaries will be able to further the CARE agenda by promoting concepts and programs learned from the congress.

Reconciliation workshop

Twenty-two youth and opinion leaders from Pan and Goemai communities in Quanpan local government area in Plateau state attended a three day reconciliation workshop from July 17 to 19, 2006. The two communities were engaged in an ethnic conflict early this year when the Plateau state government located a Development Area Office in one of the two neighboring areas.

Organized by the International Foundation for Education and Self Help (IFESH), the foundation seeks to achieve Conflict Abatement through Local Mitigation (CALM) in Kano, Kaduna, Plateau, Rivers and Delta states of Nigeria. The Inter-Faith Mediation Center (IMC), a Muslim/Christian Dialogue Forum acted as facilitators at the seminar.

At the end of the workshop, youth from both communities were able to achieve forgiveness and a common appreciation of each other's right to live in peace.

A highlight of the workshop was the signing of a Peace Declaration document by the Goemai and Pan peoples. IFESH partners with USAID to strengthen capacity for discord management in conflict-prone parts of Nigeria.

Life brightens for Chika



Chika demonstrating her Braille reading skills

For Chika Oguejiofor, prospects in life had not been particularly promising. With seven other siblings in her family, the 15 year old teenager contends with

the drudgery of growing up in a remote village in Anambra state where basic medical and educational facilities are either scarce or totally absent.

Chika is also blind.

However, she is more hopeful thanks to the President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR) through USAID. The involvement of PEPFAR has enabled Hope Givers Organization, a local non-government organization to sponsor Chika to attend Basden Special Education School in Isulo, Anambra state.

Chika is excelling in her new school: she finished first in her class in the first term examinations, and she can now read Braille. Things are definitely looking brighter for Chika.

3,000 rice farmers benefit from USAID – OLAM partnership

Makurdi in Benue state was agog on Saturday, 24 June 2006 when about 3,000 rice farmers thronged Mu Farms in Makurdi to participate in the launching of the "Rice Extension Out-growers program". The event was sponsored by USAID-MARKETS and OLAM Nigeria Limited, an agribusiness to launch the partnership and demonstrate what it offers the farmers. The occasion also flagged-off the rice planting season in the state.

In his comments, Michael Satin, Agriculture and Economic Growth team leader of USAID, expressed deep satisfaction with the partnership between the agribusiness and USAID-MARKETS.

Commenting on the joint venture, the state governor, Dr. George Akume stated that Benue State is the food basket of Nigeria and in particular, a major rice producing state. He acknowledged the contribution of OLAM to the agricultural development of the state and the encouragement so far received from USAID-MARKETS.

Responding, the Honorable Minister of Agriculture, Mallam Adamu Bello who represented President Olusegun Obasanjo commended the partnership and promised to make fertilizer available to the farmers at affordable prices.

The highpoint of the ceremony was the award of prizes to farmers who excelled in rice production in the previous season. To the admiration of all, the best prize went to a female farmer, Mrs. Tabitta Noon. Altogether, about 3000 farmers who attended the ceremony were mobilized and networked into the partnership. Their leaders had received training by MARKETS earlier in the season.

The event was concluded with the symbolic seeding of the field by the minister and other dignitaries.

USAID/Nigeria Opens Partnership Office

Partnerships between USAID/Nigeria and both public and private institutions in the country commenced with the recent opening of the Mission's Partnership Office.

The Partnership Office will facilitate partnerships with public and private organizations that further the accomplishment of USAID/Nigeria's strategic goals. While potential partnerships may span a wide range of technical areas, priority areas of intervention are malaria, HIV/AIDS prevention, routine immunization, poverty alleviation in the North, and youth employment/enterprise development in the Niger Delta.

Recognizing that Nigeria has a vast and dynamic private sector, it is expected that such joint ventures will offer great opportunity to both parties. A private sector corporation may have interest in partnering with USAID/Nigeria as part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative or as part of its business plan for accessing markets to buy and sell goods or hire skilled and productive workers.

CSR offers opportunities for USAID/Nigeria to leverage funds to support traditional development activities. Oil companies, multinationals, established Nigerian companies, and a variety of foundations represent only a portion of organizations looking to improve their image and give back to the communities in which they work.

Partnerships with other public or non-profit institutions also have clear benefits for the Mission. Other donors, Public International Organizations, NGOs, and the government of Nigeria have similar objectives with overlapping priorities. Public partnerships not only allow USAID to be involved in activities of larger scale, they contribute to donor coordination and decrease the likelihood of activities competing for beneficiaries or undermining the results of others. True and successful partnerships offer all stakeholders involved the ability to identify development problems, pool resources, and increase reach and impact to solve problems.

The Partnership Office in Nigeria is led by Latanya Mapp-Frett Esq.

Sullivan Summit

Abuja, the Nigerian capital played host to the 7th Leon H. Sullivan Summit from the 17th to 21st of July, 2007. With the broad theme 'Africa: A continent of Opportunities – Building Partnerships for Success', the conference focused on how synergies could be brought to fruition in agriculture, energy, telecommunication, oil and gas. Other discussions focused on development issues like education, health, HIV/AIDS, entrepreneurship and brain drain.

President Olusegun Obasanjo hosted dignitaries from all over the world including several African heads of government, former US President Bill Clinton and World Bank President, Paul Wolfowitz. Also in attendance were business and political leaders, academia and representatives of national and international civil and multinational organizations.

The Sullivan Summit is a biannual event organized by the Sullivan Foundation to create bridges between America and Africa by encouraging private enterprise and engendering strategic partnerships for the development of Africa.

Site Trip: Kanyang Communities get boost in agricultural technology

The Kanyang communities 1 & 2 in Cross River state consist of about 1700 people whose primary occupation is subsistence agriculture of cash and food crops. Prominent crops are cocoa, cassava, plantain and bananas and bush mango (ogbono). In the main, men grow cocoa, while women cultivate cassava and bananas. Bush mango, a common soup ingredient grows wild and is harvested by both men and women. The communities also engage in game (bush-meat) hunting.

Cocoa

USAID, in partnership with Associates in Rural Development Inc. (ARD) and International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) is introducing new technologies for managing cocoa farms with a view to deterring the Kanyang from exploiting the neighboring Mbe Primary Forest which is classified as a critical area. The technologies include pruning, which increases crop yield; harvesting that reduces black-pod disease enabling the farmer to spend less on fungicides which has negative effects on the environment and farmers' health. This project covers fourteen more cocoa farming communities in the state. Each community is provided with two farming facilitators who assist in technology transfer through the Farmers' Field School approach.

Cassava

Improved cassava varieties through cuttings have also been introduced to the Kanyang women farmers who have organized themselves into seven enterprise groups of roughly 30 members each. Three of these groups have been trained in cassava farming and processing and business management. USAID has also installed processing machines in three of the seven communities. The processing machines consist of a grater and a press to make cassava flour as well as a fuel powered engine. As equity, the communities buy into the

project by providing housing for the equipment, manpower to run the machines as well as security. According to Mrs. Rebecca Oben, of the Kanyang Cassava Producers' Association, yield per hectare has increased from 8 to 10 metric tons to between 12 and 15 metric tons per hectare with the improved varieties. The association also has a cooperative nursery for multiplication.



A farmer grafting a Bush Mango tree

Bush Mango

Bush mango is a favorite soup condiment eaten all over Nigeria. Unfortunately, the fruit grows wild with no concerted effort by farmers to cultivate it. ARD is to help domesticate the cultivation of bush mango to reduce pressure on the wild stock and increase output thus improving the livelihoods of these communities. They also organize the farmers into cooperatives and create a direct supply chain with marketers in Abakaliki central market. With the newly introduced grafting technology, it is expected the harvesting period will be reduced from between seven and ten years to about three years.

7 FSOS promoted at USAID/Nigeria

Seven USAID/Nigeria Foreign Service Officers were promoted in August. Those promoted are Stephen Herbaly, Akua Kwateng-Addo and Karen Kasan - all Team Leaders; Wayne Frank – Agricultural Officer; Jennifer Graetz and Kevin Smith – Project Development Officers; and Joseph Lessard, a Private Enterprise Officer.

At a reception to congratulate them, Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. John Campbell specifically recognized the value of the services of the newly elevated staff, likening them to fervent missionaries: to Nigeria and the U.S. He urged them to continue to add value to humanity. For the Mission itself, there have never been so many promotions in one sweep. We wish them more successes in the future.



Karen Kasan, Steve Herbaly, Wayne Frank and Joe Lessard



Listening to Ambassador Campbell's wise counsel



... with Ambassador Campbell



... with Natalie Freeman, Sandy Ojikutu, Anne Fleuret, Darlene Cutshall and Tad Findeisen

AT GWAGWALADA...



Ambassador Campbell with graduates of the HIV/AIDS Counseling and Testing Training Center

AT MAKURDI....



Launching of the rice planting season in Benue state, a USAID-MARKETS supported project

SUCCESS STORIES

Schools Gain Access to Clean Water

Three large schools shared the same complex and a single toilet facility for 70 teachers and 1,131 pupils in Lagos Island, a metropolitan Local Government Area in Lagos State. Ebute Elefun, Tinubu Methodist and Holy Cross public primary schools, like so many other public buildings in the area, had no access to a water supply.

The lack of water compelled student and staff alike to drink from questionable sources, thus exposing them to various water borne diseases. As if this was not enough, odors from the restrooms pervaded the three schools, making it almost impossible to concentrate on lessons. Pupils took turns fetching water for the toilets and for general use. While some pupils replaced their books with buckets, others used the opportunity to play truant.



Pupils now have access to healthy water

Photo credits: Morris Kamara, COMPASS Lago

This was the challenge faced by the schools until United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Community Participation for Action in the Social Sector (COMPASS) project intervened. Integrating the three PTAs into a Community Coalition, through COMPASS they learned to identify and prioritize the schools' needs and manage resources for school improvements. The first need that received overwhelming consensus was the problem of school water supply.

The PTAs received a grant from COMPASS to construct a borehole, which now provides water to the three schools within the compound. Pupils now attend classes with full concentration and healthy participation. Ebute Elefun's Assistant Head Teacher, Alhaja A.M. Sanni, says "the toilets are now neat and in good condition and pupils no longer roam the street for water".

Girls Rescued From Forced Marriage and Hawking

Twelve-year-old Halima lives with her grandmother and father in Durba, a ward in Kibiya Local Government Area in Kano State. Holding to tradition, Halima's grandmother insisted that Halima marry rather than return to school. Though Halima's father was a teacher and was deeply concerned about his daughter's well-being, he had no funds to pay the school fees. Adding to the dilemma, the grandmother threatened to ostracize Halima's father if he went against her wishes. Social and financial problems were facing Zaharia, another young Nigerian girl. To help her family, she had been forced into "hawking" soap and other products along city streets. Zaharia's desire to go to school was so strong that she actually ran away from home to avoid being forced to "hawk".

Both girls heard of a public rally where they might find a sympathetic ear. Halima and Zaharia attended a Girl Child Enrollment and Retention Sensitization drive in Durba, where they found support from leaders of the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN), a partner with the USAID-funded Community Participation for Action in the Social Sector (COMPASS) Project.



A new lease of life for Halima and Zaharia
Photo credits: **FOMWAN**

Finding Halima's grandmother unrelenting, FOMWAN members sought advice from the ward head, who arranged for them to meet with Halima's father. After learning of his financial constraints, the FOMWAN Kano Chapter agreed to sponsor Halima, as well as Zaharia, providing for their needs while they finish school. Through the COMPASS project's girls' education activities, communities are increasingly made aware of the importance of girls' education. FOMWAN and another COMPASS partner, the Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA), have visited district heads and rulers throughout Kano, all of whom have indicated their support, warning parents in their areas that it is a serious offense to keep children out of school. Because of these awareness campaigns, local Boards of Education have pledged to provide scholarships to girls whose families cannot afford to keep them in school.

Transition

It is with great sadness that USAID/Nigeria announces the passing of our beloved colleague, Dr. Bunmi Dosumu. Bunmi passed away on Friday, July 14, 2006 after a valiant fight against a serious illness.

Bunmi served USAID/Nigeria with distinction for 13 years. During her career, she won several awards for her dedication, including the USAID/Nigeria "FSN of the Year Award" in 2002. Bunmi was a tireless, committed and passionate leader in reproductive health in Nigeria, in a country context that is often extremely challenging. Bunmi will always be remembered as the heart of USAID's reproductive health program, a relentless advocate for the decrease in maternal and newborn mortality, the ultimate management professional and an inspiring colleague, teacher and friend.

An emotive memorial service was held at the USAID Mission in Abuja on July 28, 2006. It was attended by staff, partners and members of her family. She was buried in Ikorodu on August 4, 2006. Bunmi will be very greatly missed.



Dr. Bunmi Dosumu

ABUJA DATELINE is the electronic newsletter of USAID/NIGERIA. The journal publishes information on programs implemented by USAID and its local and international partners. To request copies of this newsletter, please contact Egun Aleshinloye at ealeshinloye@usaid.gov